STATEMENT BY MINISTER

POSTAL AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS TARIFFS

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, On behalf of my colleague, Shri Vasant Sathe, Hon'ble Minister for Energy and Communications, I am making the following statement:

The House is aware that there are large demands for expansion and upgradation of telephone services in the country. We are also engaged in the task of correcting the imbalance that exists in the provision of telecom infrastructure between urban and rural areas for which we have to increase the coverage of the rural sector. Development in telecommunication technology has also necessitated replacing our old exchanges with electronic telephone exchangs. The transmission media are also being moernised. Quality of service is sought to be improved by modernising the network.

It is necessary to raise adequate financial resources for this programme. For this purpose the Government has reluctantly decided to revise some of the telecommunication charges.

In revising the charges, care has been taken to see that weaker sections and people in rural areas are not affected adversely. To spare these under-privileged from extra burden, rentals of telephones in the telephone exchange systems of less than 100 lines, Public Telephone charges in respect of public telephones situated in rural areas and charges for telegrams have been retained at the present level. There will also be no increase in the trunk call charges for distance upto 50 Kms. Tariff for STD calls made during late hours of the night will be reduced to 25 per cent of the normal tariff; this reduction will be notified in the near future separately.

The revision is basically confined to rentals of larger measured rate exchange systems; fees per call unit beyond the free call limit; charges for trunk calls and charges for local and STD calls put through the public telephone in measured rate exchanges.

The revised tariff is expected to yeild an additional revenue of about Rs. 500 crores in full year. This amount will be used to finance the expansion, upgradation and improvement in the telecommunication services.

The Indian Telegraph Rules, 1951, will be suitably amended to bring into force the above changes under the authority vested in the Central Government under Section 7 of the Indian Telegraphs Act, 1885. The relevant Notification in the official Gazette will be placed on the Table of the House in due course. I am laying a Statement on the Table of the House, giving the existing and proposed new tariffs. The revision will come into effect from 1st April, 1978.

I will now speak to you on the Postal Services of the country. As the Hon'ble Members are, no doubt, aware the Department of Posts has a wide network of about 1,45,000 Post Offices through the length and breadth of the country of which 1,27,000 are located in rural and remote areas. The Department proposes to open about 3,000 more Post Offices in each of the remaining two years of the current Plan, so that the Seventh Plan target of opening 6000 Post Offices can be fulfilled.

In keeping with the pressing demand from the Hon'ble Members and also the public at large, the Government desires to undertake a massive programme of providing postal facilities in each one of the remaining 74,000 Panchayat Villages in the next two years. To achieve this highly desirable objective, the Government is of the considered view that raising of additional resources is a condition precedent. We have, therefore, decided to partially meet the requirement of additional resources by a small increase in the rates of some of the Postal Services.

I now propose that the present rate of Money Order commission may be increased marginally by another 10 paise for every Rs. 10 or part thereof. This will imply that as against the rate of 30 paise for every Rs. 10|- or part thereof on money orders upto the value of Rs. 10|- the revised rate of commission would be

[Shri Santosh Mohan Dev]

40 paise. Similarly, for Money Orders above the value of Rs. 50/- as against the present rate of 40 paise for every Rs. 10|- or part thereof, the revised rate would be 50 paise. I also propose that the minimum money order commission would be 50 paise. Thus, for a person who may be sending a money order for Rs. 50|- every month to his kith and kin in the villages, the additional monthly burden would be only 50 paise because as against the present money order commission of Rs. 1.50P, he will have to pay Rs. 2|-. Similarly, for a person who may be sending a monthly money order of Rs. 100|-, the additional burden would be only Re. 1 per month because as against Rs. 4|-. now being paid by him as commission, he would have to pay Rs. 5|-. It is also proposed to revise the registration charges from the existing rate of Rs. 4.50P to a round figure of Rs. 5|- In the case of Inland letters, as against the present tariff rate of 35 paise, the Department is incurring an expenditure of 89 paise on its handling. The cost of printing and stationery of the inland letter is itself of the order of 15 paise or so. Having regard to this, it is proposed to charge 15 paise per inland letter as a stationery charge, on the analogy of the already existing stationery charge on embossed envelopes. This will imply that whereas departmentally printed inland letters would cost 50 paise, in case privately printed inland letters are used, the tariff would continue to be 35 paise. I also propose to increase the existing stationery charge of 10 paise on each embossed envelop to 15 paise. These proposals are expected to generate an additional revenue of about Rs. 49 crores in a full year and are proposed to be given effect to from 1-4.1988.

10. I may also add that the Department of Posts is continuing its efforts to improve its efficiency and to reduce expenditure wherever possible. A new service called "Speed Post" was started last year, has picked up considerably even in the face of stiff competition from private couriers. It is proposed to mount a campaign to expand and improve this service further. There is also a proposal to start an Electronic Mail Service from the middle of April this year which will enable the Department to earn additonal revenue. Proposals are also on hand for mechanisation of some of the Postal operations, not only to improve efficiency but also to make the services more cost-effective. At the same time, certain incentive schemes are also being introduced to reward the staff who are able to increase productivity. These steps are expected to improve the working of the Department as a whole. I do hope Hon'ble Members will support this small increase in the tariff rates, having regard to the overall objective of better service to our people specially in the uncovered rural areas.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATION

Department of Telecommunications

Statement showing the revision of Telecommunication Tariffs

Sl. No.	Item	Existing tariff	Proposed tariff
1	2	3	4
1.	*Measured Rate System:*	(Bi-monthly rental)	(Bi-monthly rental)
1.1	Exchange Systems of less than 100 lines	125	125
1.2	Exchange Systems of 100 lines and above but below 1000 lines	125	140

1	2	3	4
1.3	Exchange Systems of 1000 lines and above but below 10,000 lines . . .	125	160
1.4	Exchange Systems of 10,000 lines and above but below 30,000 lines . . .	150	200
1.5	Exchange Systems of 30,000 lines and above but below 1 lakh lines . . .	175	250
1.6	Exchange Systems of 1 lakh lines and above but below 3 lakh lines . . .	200	300
1.7	Exchange Systems of 3 lakh lines and above	200	330
2.	*Fees per call unit for calls in a bi-monthly cycle:*		
2.1	Upto 275 calls	Free	Free
2.2	From 276 calls to 2000 calls . . .	60 paise	80 Paise
2.3	From 2001 Calls to 5000 calls . . .	80 Paise	Re. 1/-
2.4	In excess of 5000 calls	80 paise	Rs. 1 25
3.	*Charges for Trunk Calls* (Redial distance between any two exchanges or between any two long-distance charging centres).		
3.1	Upto 20 Kms	Rs. 2/-	Rs. 2/-
3.2	Exceeding 20 Kms but not exceeding 50 Kms.	Rs. 4/-	Rs. 4/-
3.3	Exceeding 50 Kms. but not exceeding 100 Kms	Rs. 6/-	Rs. 8/-
3.4	Exceeding 100 Kms. but not exceeding 200 Kms.	Rs. 12-	Rs. 16/-
3.5	Exceeding 200 Kms. but not exceeding 500 Kms.	Rs. 18/-	Rs. 27/-
3.6	Exceeding 500 Kms. but not exceeding 1000 Kms.	Rs. 30/-	Rs. 36/-
3.7	Exceeding 1000 Kms.	Rs. 36/-	Rs. 45/-
4.	*Charges for the use of Public Telephones:*		
4.1	PTs connected to measured rate exchanges	50 Paise	Re. 1/-
4.2	S.T.D. PTs	60 Paise per unit	Re. 1/- per unit
	Estimated additional revenue in a year: (including M-T.N.L.)	500 crores	

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY (Pondicherry): Sir, the honourable Minister has said that the quality of service is sought to be improved by modernising the network. It is a doubtful question because when the network is larger, the quality of service is poorer in the telecommunication system which we are experiencing today in our country. One thing I appreciate, a thrust has been given to the rural areas. Rural areas have been considered a neglected lot in the telecommunication sys-

[Shri V. Narayanasamy]

tem and some concessions have been made by the honourable Minister. I welcome this move. But I am unable to accept the claim that the first 275 calls are free from tariff. They are saying that they are not charging for the first 275 calls. No, that is not true. They are charging a minimum rate from the consumer for each telephone. From 276 to 2000 calls the rate has been raised from 60 paise to 80 paise, from 2001 to 5000 calls it has been raised from 80 paise to Re. 1 and in excess of 5000 calls the rate has been increased to Rs. 1.25. But the real problem before us is this. You ask the honourable Members or even persons outside and everyone will tell you, the actual number of calls made by them is less but the meter reading is more. the meter reading is more. I think me because we are all victims of it. Because the meter reading is with them, they manipulate it and the charges shown are only an eye-wash. The people are not going to be benefited by this. Even the marginal increase which they have made will affect the large business community and the public also. My suggestion is—I hope the Minister will agree to it—that they should fix a small meter, should provide a small meter to the customer himself, with the equipment itself so that the customer will know how many calls he has made and they can also correctly know just as in the electricity system. Will the honourable Minister agree to this?

Secondly, Sir, there is no necessity for them to increase the Money Order commission. This again touches the common man, the poor man in the village. They say that they are giving benefits to the poor people in the rural areas. But we find that these things affect the common man very much. By increasing it by 10 paise, the Government is getting some revenue. But the burden is more on the common man and, therefore, I would like to blame the Government on this score. I would like to know from the honourable Minister whether he is going to withdraw this proposal.

Thirdly, a proposal has been given by the honourable Minister for increasing the funds. I am one with him on this and I agree that funds have to be raised. But efficient service also is to be maintained by the telecommunication network. Nowadays, Sir, throughout the country, a strike is going on by the telecommunication people, by the telephone operators, and no steps have been taken. But they have come up with a proposal for the purpose of increasing the rates. I find no justification for this. Will the honourable Minister kindly reconsider his decision?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JAGESH DESAI): Yes, Mr. Sukomal Sen.

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN (West Bengal): Sir, today is another black day in our parliamentary history.

Sir, in the Lok Sabha only an hour ago, the Railway Minister placed the Railway Budget and has touched the people, has taxed the people, to the tune of Rs. 700 crores. Although the Budget is going to be presented after four or five days, i.e. on the 29th of this month, the Telecommunications Minister has come out with the proposal to hike the rates in respect of telecommunication services to the tune of Rs. 500 crores and another Rs. 300 crores in respect of postal services. It is a total attack on the common people of our country by the Government through the Railway Budget as well as the postal and telecommunication proposals. These things should have come in the General Budget in the normal course. But, before the General Budget comes, the Minister comes up with a proposal for hikes in the telecommunication rates.

Now, Sir, what is the condition of the telecommunication services in the country today? Both the services, telecommunication and the postal services, are in a shambles. In the field of postal services, what is the position today? It has been privatized; the number of workers

has been reduced; new employment has been stopped; and the exploitation of the workers has increased But the Government is coming forward with proposals to further tax the common man, the man who writes a letter to his people, the man who sends money to his family people. The common man will be affected by the increase in the Money Order commission and the rates of the ordinary envelopes and inland letters. So, all these are against the people. Take the case of the telecommunicaton services. They have promised that the number of telephones would be increased, that the network will be increased. But what is the service today? In New Delhi, what is the position today? In *Calcutta and Bombay, what is the service* today? Day by day, it is degenerating. under the circumstances, instead of strenthening the services, the Government comes up with a proposal to tax the people to increase the tariff rates, in respect of both the telecommunication and postal services. I severely condemn the attitude of this Government and I condemn this proposal. At the same time, I would like to request the Government to withdraw this. If the Government has any respect for the common people, for their suffering, it must immediately withdraw this proposal. This proposal beings out the character of the Government in all its nakedness. It is anti people, anti-working class and anti-common man and this Goverument should resign. I demand that the Government should resign because it is actually killing the people, massacring the people of this country. So, I condemn this proposal and I request the Government to withdraw it.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JAGESH DESAI): Now, Mr. Satya Prakash Malaviya.

श्री सत्य प्रकाश मालवीय (उत्तर प्रदेश) : माननीय उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, आज का दिन इस देश के संसदीय इतिहास में सबसे बड़ा काला दिवस है। जब यह देश सूखे से और बाढ़ से पीड़ित है, देश की साधारण जनता गरीबी से पिस रही है उस समय आज ही के दिन कुछ र पहले इस सदन में रेल बजट प्रस्तुत किया गया उसको समा पटल पर रखा गया। एक तरह से सारी क्लास के किराये बढ़ा दिये गये और इसमें 549 करोड़ का आर्थिक भार इस देश की साधारण जनता पर लादा गया है। 500 करोड़ का आर्थिक भार टेलीफोन की दरों में वृद्धि करके डाला गया है। प्रति काल में वृद्धि करके और ट्रंक काल की दरों में वृद्धि करके यह भार डाला गया है। ठीक इसी प्रकार से 49 करोड़ का आर्थिक भार मनीआर्डर की दरों में वृद्धि करके डाला गया है और जो अन्तर्देशीय पत्र हैं उनकी दरों में वृद्धि करके डाला गया है। सान्यवर, अन्तर्देशीय पत्र श्री रफी अहमद किदवई जी के जमाने में शुरू किया गया था। यह इसलिए शुरू किया गया था कि बहुत से लोग जो ज्यादा पैसे खर्च नहीं कर सकते हैं उनको सुविधा प्रदान करने के लिए यह जारी किया गया था। एक ओर तो इस देश में गरीब लोग महंगाई की मार से मारे जा रहे हैं दूसरी ओर इस सरकार को देश के गरीबों की कोई चिन्ता नहीं है। हर चीज के दामों में वृद्धि हो रही है। हमारी फौज के सिपाही और पुलिस के सिपाही जो देश की सीमाओं पर तैनात हैं और देश की सीमाओं की रक्षा करते हैं, जो अपने घरों से हजारों और सैकड़ों मील दूर रहते हैं, वे प्रति माह अपने बच्चों की फीस के लिए अपनी तनख्वाह में से रुपया भेजते रहते हैं। इसलिए इस सरकार को सोचना चाहिए था कि इस प्रकार से जो आर्थिक बोझ आम लोगों पर पड़े। इस देश के गरीब लोग जो पहले से ही आर्थिक बोझ से लदे हुए हैं, उनका आर्थिक बोझ और बढ़ जाएगा। उन लोगों की आर्थिक स्थिति पर इसका कुप्रभाव पड़ेगा। सरकार को यह वृद्धि नहीं करनी चाहिए थी। सरकार के और बहुत से खर्चे हैं जिनमें करोड़ों-करोड़ रुपया सरकार का नष्ट हो रहा है। करोड़ों-करोड़ रुपयों का इस देश में वेस्टफुल एक्सपेन-डीचर होता है। टेलीफोन विभाग में ही ऐसी प्रणाली है जिसमें जो उद्योगपति हैं, पैसे वाले लोग हैं, बड़े बड़े व्यापारी हैं, वे लोग इस विभाग के टेलीफोन आपरेटरों से मिलकर सांठगांठ करते

[श्री सत्य प्रकाश मालवीय]

और जब उनको ट्रंक काल करनी होती है तो उनका टेलीफोन पहले मिला देते हैं और उसका पैसा आपस में बांट कर खा जाते हैं। दूसरे लोगों को ट्रंक काल नहीं मिलता है। अगर आपके विभाग को पैसे की जरूरत है तो आप आप लोगों पर यह भार न लादकर दूसरे तरीके से भी खर्च में कमी ला सकते हैं। इसलिए मेरा निवेदन है कि आपने जो यह प्रस्ताव किया है, आप इस पर पुनः विचार कीजिये और इसको वापस लीजिये अगर आप इसको वापस नहीं लेंगे तो हम लोग इस सदन के अन्दर तो इसका विरोध करेंगे ही, साथ ही इस सरकार को मजबूर करेंगे कि इन बढ़ी हुई दरों को वापस ले। आप जानते हैं कि अगले महीने 15 मार्च को "भारत बन्द" आयोजित किया जा रहा है। हम इस देश में नारा देंगे और इस देश के लोगों का आवाहन करेंगे कि इन दरों को सरकार वापस ले। कल ही "भारत बचाओ" का नारा दिया है। अगर यही स्थिति रही तो आगामी 15 मार्च, को प्रधान मंत्री और दूसरे मंत्रियों को इस बात के लिए मजबूर किया जाएगा कि वे अपनी-अपनी गद्दी से हटें। इसलिए मेरा निवेदन है कि आप इस पर पुनः विचार करके इन दरों को वापस लीजिये और गरीब लोगों के ऊपर इस आर्थिक भार को मत डालिये।

SHRI CHITTA BASU (West Bengal): Sir, I rise to protest and protest very strongly against this practice of pre-budget exercise of increasing the taxes in a different way. Sir, it should have been the normal budget-making process. The Telecommunication Department has avoided this budget-making process and imposed heavy taxes of 550 crores of rupees. Is it not an indirect method of subverting the budget-making process? As in the past, only a few weeks before the Budget Session, the prices of several items have been increased. Therefore, Sir, I raise my objection against this very principle and I lodge my strongest possible protest against this practice.

As regards the proposal of the Government in regard to the telecommunications, particularly the telephones, the Government should really examine the present state of affairs of the working of the telecommunication system in Calcutta. They have been trying since long to improve the telephone system in Calcutta. But they have failed. Now they propose to increase the charges. The telephone subscribers cannot be penalised for the deficiencies and inefficincy of the Government. This is another example of how the subscribers are being penalised for the inefficiency of the Department itself. Now, Sir, the Government proposes to increase the money order commission, the inland envelopes charges etc. I think the Government and the Minister, Mr. Santosh Mohan Dev, have forgotten the very objective of these services. These are public utility services. This has got a social objective to fulfil. It is not a question of commercialisation. The whole approach of the Government is that these services are to be commercialised. This is not a private sector. And this will lead ultimately to a position that the Government would handover the postal services to the private enterprises. This is a prelude to that because I read somewhere that the Government is also contemplating a proposal to hand-over the postal services to the private agencies.

3.00 P.M.

SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA: Privatisation.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: Therefore, Sir, all the time, these things are being done. He has raised the question of increasing th stationary charges. There is a limitless wastage in the Department itself and there are corrupt practices. And if those are checked and minimised, I think, it would not have been necessary to increase the charges for the inland letters. Therefore, Sir, it is basically an anti-people measure. This exhibits the Government's tendency of ultimately handing over the public utility services to the private sector. They have forgotten the very objective, the social objective of these services.

Sir, I strongly protest against this because it is anti-people because it is a part of the oft-repeated practice of increasing the taxes by bypassing the Parliament, and lastly because the Government also has abandoned the policy of increasing the public utility services and have lost sight of the social objectives of the public utility services. And the people of this country will object to this. Not only we are objecting to it but the people of this country will also object to it through a successful Bharat Bandh on the 15th of March.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY (Tamil Nadu): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, once again this Government has struck an unbearable blow on the common man. I strongly oppose this tariff revision. It is not at all justifiable on any count. So, this is a trick of the Government to put the burden on the common man before the original Budget is presented. Here the Minister says that they will derive an additional revenue of Rs. 500 crores. As far as the tele-communication system is concerned, you have not developed the services. It is going from bad to worse. The telephones do not work at all. Sir, if you want to correctly judge the development and the prosperity obtained in a country, you could judge it from the working of the telephones. You take any country. The telephone system in our country is the worst system among all the developing countries. Sir, recently I met a very leading Cardiologist in Madras. He told me that his telephone did not work continuously for ten days. Even after he repeatedly made complaints to the general manager, nothing was done. The result, two of his patients died. They could not contact him in time. Sir, whenever you dial a number, the first response you get from the other side is, it is wrong number. People will not understand what you mean by wrong number in other countries. And now you are increasing the tariff. It is unimaginable. For trunk call charges they are, for distances exceeding 100 km up to 200 km, increasing tariff from Rs. 12 to Rs. 16, i.e., by Rs. 4 Again between 200 km up to 500 km, they are increasing it by Rs. 9, and from 500 km up to 1000 km they are increasing it by Rs. 6, and exceeding 1000 km they are raising it again by Rs. 9. Sir, it is a vast country. You always speak about unity and integrity. This country stretches from Cape Comorin up to Himalayas. People have to come here to Delhi. We have to make trunk calls to Madras and other far away places. And these charges the common man cannot bear. This increase in charges will affect trade, industry and in fact all activity and all sections of the society. Sir the technicians of the telephone department are on the path of agitation. They have been agitating for their demands which have fallen on deaf ears and the Government has been taking shelter under the plea that the Aggarwal committee will solve the problem. But the Aggarwal committee's report has not been accepted by the employees and they have been agitating for their reasonable demands and this Government is not bothered about their demands and grievances. On the other hand, they are putting the burden on the common man.

As far as postal services are concerned, something has been mentioned about the Speedpost. A poor man cannot think of availing of the facility of Speedpost, however urgent or important his need may be. He cannot afford to spend Rs. 25 or 30 for availing this facility. Here also why have you opened the doors for private enterprise? They are looting the money. Where is the need for private enterprise? Sir, this whole raising of the tariff, postal tariff and telephone tariff, it is an unbearable burden and unjustifiable burden on the common man. I strongly oppose this move.

PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA (Andhra Pradesh): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I stand with anguish, I stand with sorrow, to oppose the way in which this Government is indulging in anti-people activities.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH (West Bengal): Anti-people practices are practised in anti-people way.

PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA : Sir, in the month of December and January they

[Prof. C. Lakshmanna]

resorted to the unethical practice of daising the administered prices and pocketing Rs. 2,250 crores. Today, Sir, just three days before the annual budget is to be presented, they have once again resorted to the same unethical practice of raising taxes to the tune of Rs. 549 crores. And, in the morning we had to witness the spectacle of raising Rs. 385 crores, with a heavy burden on the common man, What does all this mean? It means that this Government is bent upon further crunching the already bent bodies of people in this country. They want to crush them. This is the way they want to crush.

Sir, I am opposing this on two counts. I am opposed to the raising of the rates in general. I am more opposed to the raising of the rates which affect mostly the common man in particular. I will take up the second point first and come to the first later. Sir, in the case of trunk calls one would notice that the trunk calls exceeding 200 km but not exceeding 500 km, the rise is by Rs. 9 from Rs. 18 to Rs. 27. For the next 500 km to 1000 km and for distance exceeding 1000 km, the rise is Rs. 6 and Rs. 9. What does this mean? It means, the people would make trunk calls only for short distances. It is a great burden imposed on the common man. I am opposed to any such rise and resorting to this practice of raising the burden of the common man is much reprehensible.

Similarly, even in case of postal services, they have raised the rate of inland covers to 50 paise. Either the cover has to be purchased from the Government or they would encourage private agencies to print these covers and sell to the people. It is a dubious measure adopted by the Government only to encourage private agencies. In the case of envelopes, stationery charges have been raised to 15 paise. The result is that the common man resorting to writing letters through inland covers or envelopes will have to pay more. On the other hand, they are making all efforts to improve the service of Speed Post and also to introduce electronic mail service. Who will be the beneficiary? I am not opposed to their introduction but who will be the beneficiary? It is not the common man; he will not resort to Speed Post nor will he be knowing about it.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: And this is from capital city to capital city.

PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: All these measures taken are merely to coerce the common man. I would, therefore, request the Government to coolly consider whether it is necessary to increase these rates. If that is the way you want to have your technology missions, for Heaven's sake, don't have that approach. You already have five technology missions, and if the technology mission is making you force the common man to pay for the luxury of having a concept of technology missions please don't have it. On the other hand, you should think in terms of increasing your services and making these services more efficient, as you have come out to say that you are increasing the number of post offices by six thousand in the next two years. I would like to ask you whether you can give a post office to every village in the country? That you cannot think of. Your technology mission does not think of providing a post office in every village. Therefore, kindly consider it coolly. Don't consider it as a partisan view of either the Opposition or the Treasury Benches I am sure most of the Members on the Treasury Benches, in their heart of hearts, are groaning; their voice is not coming out; it is being stifled for some reason.... (*Interruptions*).

Therefore, I plead with the hon. Minister not to indulge in these things. All your claims of improvement in the efficiency in your services, telecommunication and postal services, are not reflected. Take the case of making a small concession as has been put here. The hon. Minister says that STD calls during late hours will be charged at 25 per cent of the normal tariff. You say that the reduction will be notified in due course separately. When it is a question of slapping heavy imposts on the common man, raising it from 35 paise to 50 paise in the case of inland for example, you say that it will come into effect from the

1st of April. On the other hand, when it comes to the question of giving some small facility, which I do not consider as a necessary one, you are thinking of coming out with a statement in due course, in the near future.

Therefore, I would request the hon. Minister not to resort to such black acts and blacken the face of the Government further. Already it has been blackened enough. Therefore, I would beseech you to kindly consider what I am saying and reduce this burden on the common man. I can only say that development is sidelined and the common man is crushed by pet fashionable ideas like the consortium approach, the technology mission approach and programmes like computerisation which are of no benefit to the common man as such. What you should do now is to reduce the burden on his shoulders. Kindly do that. If you cannot do it, the common man is not going to tolerate it. When we observed the 'Bharat Bachao Day' yesterday, we did not realise that so soon we have to *bachao* the people from such black things and black acts. About Rs. 1,000 crores additional burden has been put on the common man. This has come just a day after the Bharat Bachao Day. Please do not sanctify it in the name of anguish. For God's sake do something for the common man. Otherwise, he is not going to tolerate it. He will not allow you to laugh at him. You may be thinking today that you are laughing at the people. But people are going to make you laugh at yourself. Please take this warning.

डा० बापू कालदाते (महाराष्ट्र) : उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, मुझे इसमें कोई आश्चर्य नहीं लगा कि सरकार इस ढंग के अलग-अलग आर्थिक बोझ सत्र के पूर्व या सत्र में लगाने का प्रयास करेगी। हमारे लिये तो यह कोई नई बात नहीं है क्योंकि लगातार 1980 से लेकर हम हर साल देखते आये हैं कि यह सरकार की नीति रही है, संसद की अवहेलना करने की, यह नीति रही है कि एडमिनिस्टर्ड प्राइसेज़ इस या उस ढंग से बार-बार लाने की, ताकि वह लोगों को धोखा दे सकें कि सरकार का घाटे का जो बजट है, इसमें कुछ कम हो जाए।

हम यह जानते हैं कि अर्थ-व्यवस्था जिस दुरावस्था में आपने पहुंचा दी है, उससे निकलने का कोई रास्ता आपके पास नहीं है, बजाए इसके कि लोगों के ऊपर ज्यादा से ज्यादा आर्थिक बोझ डालते रहें और यही एक कारण है कि आज भी जब संसद का बजट सत्र शुरू है, उसमें आपके डिपार्टमेंट ने उसकी मांगों को लाने की बजाए, आपने इस तरीके से, गलत तरीके से, नीति शून्य तरीके से प्राइसेज़ को बढ़ाने का यह निर्णय किया है और आप उस निर्णय के साथ हमारे सामने आये हैं। हमारी धारणा तो गलत नहीं निकली, कई दिनों से हम यह कह रहे हैं कि सरकार के पास अपने घाटे को समाप्त करने के लिए दूसरा कोई रास्ता नहीं है और यह एक महीने-डेढ़ महीने में इसका जो कुछ भी परिणाम होगा, वह लोगों को भुगतना पड़ेगा।

मैं इसमें नहीं जाना चाहता हूं कि गये दो-तीन महीनों में कितने हजार करोड़ की एडमिनिस्टर्ड प्राइसेज़ या ड्राऊट के बारे में आपने जो कहा है, वह अलग-अलग ढंग से, आर्डिनेंस के जरिए या एडमिनिस्टर्ड प्राइसेज़ से आपने कितने हजार करोड़ रुपये का भार आज ही लोगों के ऊपर डाला है। आप एक तरफ कहते हैं कि सेवाओं को बेहतर बनाने का प्रयास आप करेंगे। सेवायें बढ़ती रही हैं, लेकिन बेहतर नहीं होती हैं। जैसे-जैसे सेवाओं का क्षेत्र आप बढ़ा रहे हैं, वैसे वैसे ही आपकी अकार्य क्षमता भी ज्यादा बढ़ती रही है। उसमें कोई सुधार नहीं हुआ है। मैं अपनी स्वयं की एक मिसाल देता हूं कि एक दिन सारी रात बैठा रहा, पर ट्रंक काल नहीं मिला। फिर कुछ झगड़ा करने के बाद उन्होंने हमें यह कहा कि अगर आप पहले कह देते कि आप पार्लियामेंट मेम्बर हैं, तो शायद आपको तुरन्त मिल जाती। इसका मतलब है कि यदि कोई मेम्बर पार्लियामेंट मेम्बर हो, या कोई अन्य

[डा० बापू कालदाते]

प्रतिष्ठित आदमी हो, उसका काम तो हो सकता है, लेकिन सामान्य आदमी के लिए या सामान्य ग्राहक के लिए सेवा की कोई व्यवस्था नहीं है। जिस रूरल एरिया की आप बात करते हैं, देहाती क्षेत्रों की, मैं स्वयं अभी वहां जाकर आया हूं और मैं आपको अपना अनुभव बता सकता हूं कि एक गांव में 1978 में हमने टेलीफोन एक्सचेंज लगाया। बहुत छोटा गांव है। अभी मैं वहां गया था तो उन्होंने कहा कि हमारे सारे टेलीफोन वापस कर दिए जायें। हमारे लिए उनका कोई उपयोग ही नहीं है इसलिये वापस कर दिये जायें। गांव तक तो यह टेलीफोन रखना शोभा की वस्तु हो सकता है या प्रेस्टिज का प्वायंट हो सकता है लेकिन सेवा के हद तक उस इंस्ट्रूमेंट का लोगों के लिए कोई उपयोग नहीं है। मराठवाड़ा में एक गांव है जहां लोगों ने घर के सारे टेलीफोन निकाले और प्रोसेशन लेकर वे लोग टेलीफोन एक्सचेंज में गए और उन्होंने कहा कि मेहरबानी करके ये सारे टेलीफोन आप वापस लीजिए। हमें इनकी कोई जरूरत नहीं है। सेवाओं को बेहतर बनाने का यह कोई रास्ता हो सकता है, ऐसा मैं स्वयं नहीं मानता हूं। लेकिन यह बात सही है कि उनकी सेवा कुछ लोगों के लिए बहुत अच्छी रहती है।

उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, आप जानते हैं कि महाराष्ट्र में मटका चलता था। अब चलता है या नहीं, यह मुझे मालूम नहीं है, लेकिन यहां तक मुझे याद है हमारे भूतपूर्व फाइनांस मिनिस्टर स्व० वाणखेड़े जी, उस समय हमारे जमाने में हम जब असेंबली में थे उन्होंने हमको दिखाया कि आप भले ट्रंककाल के लिए बुक करिए आपका ट्रंककाल नहीं मिलेगा, लेकिन मटके का नम्बर ठीक 9 बजे खुलता है, महाराष्ट्र में ही नहीं बल्कि सारे देश में 9 बजे खुलता है और मटके का नम्बर बराबर चलता जाता था। यह एफीशिएंसी है, यह आपकी कार्य क्षमता है। मटके के लिए कार्यक्षम है, सामान्य ग्राहकों के लिए अकार्यक्षम है। ऐसी आपकी व्यवस्था है। मैं इसके लिए आप को कहूंगा कि जो बोझ आप सामान्य लोगों पर बार-बार डाल रहे हैं इससे लोगों को क्षुब्धता है और उनमें इससे अति असन्तोष है और यह असन्तोष कहीं उग्र रूप न धारण करे, ऐसी हम लोगों की धारणा है। हम चाहते है कि सरकार का विरोध लोग शांतिमय तरीके से करते रहें, लेकिन अगर इस प्रकार का दबाव डालते रहे, आप लोगों का मुंह बंद करके बैठते रहे तो संभव है कि यह असन्तोष जो आज लोग प्रकट कर रहे हैं वह और तीव्रता से प्रकट हो करके आपके सामने आ जाए। मैं यह बात भी स्पष्ट कर देना चाहता हूं कि आज यह माडर्नाइजेशन का सारा तरीका गरीबों को उखाड़ने का तरीका है। आज यह जिस ढंग क इलैक्ट्रानिक्स की बात कर रहे हैं और इलैक्ट्रानिक्स उपकरणों की जिस ढंग से यह पोस्टल सर्विसेज, टेलीग्राफ, टेलीफोन में आयेंगे मैं कहता हूं कि इसका असर एम्प्लायमेंट पर जरूर होगा। जैसे-जैसे आप उपकरण लाते रहेंगे वैसे-वैसे आप लोगों को निकालते रहेंगे यह संभावना है और मुझे लगता है कि लोगों की नई भर्ती तो नहीं होगी लेकिन जो लोग काम पर हैं उनको आप किसी न किसी बहाने, किसी न किसी ढंग से बाहर निकालने का प्रयास, भले ही इंसेंटिव देकर ही क्यों न हो लेकिन उनको बाहर निकालने का प्रयास जरूर करते रहेंगे। यह हम बर्दाश्त नहीं करेंगे। इसे न हम बर्दाश्त करेंगे न लोग बर्दाश्त करेंगे और इसके लिए मैं कहता हूं कि आप लोग बर्दाश्त की सीमा को ध्यान में रखें। लोग बर्दाश्त की सीमा के बाहर न चले जाएं इसका आप ठीक ठीक ढंग से उपाय करें नहीं तो जो आज आप यहां पर बैठे हैं वह बैठना आपके लिए मुश्किल हो जाएगा। इसलिए इसकी तरफ मैं आपका ध्यान खींचना चाहता हूं और यह सो काल्ड माडर्नाइजेशन के नाम पर जो गरीबों के ऊपर बोझ डालने का प्रयास है मेहरबानी करके इसको आप कम करिए। इतना ही मैं आपसे निवेदन करता हूं। धन्यवाद।

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV (Maharashtra): I do not know

on what point the opposition parties are annoyed.

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: That is the difficulty you don't understand.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: That shows your incapability of understanding.

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV: I know, you are a very much capable man but you always think in the negative which I don't.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: You are a good man, a capable man, but the only thing is that you are with the Congress and that is why you refuse to understand.

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV: You are all alergic. Please listen to me. Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, there is increase in the rates of money orders with which I do not agree because money order is used by the common man. (*Interruptions*). I am coming to the point. But the other increases which have been suggested by the hon. Communications Minister are not objectionable at all.

PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: What about inland letters?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JAGESH DESAI): These are his views. I have allowed everybody to speak today.

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV: This telecommunication system should be properly maintained. Of course, I agree that there are so many defects in the working of the system itself. A few days back, while inaugurating some telephone exchange, hon. Prime Minister said that only 10 percent telephones are in the rural areas and 90 per cent telephones are in the urban areas. Where 75 percent population is residing, only 10 percent telephones are there. Unfortunately, none of the Opposition Members has raised this issue. That is the most annoying thing to me. You are just making political capital which is not there at all. It is the need of the hour that the large human mass living in the rural sector must be given equal social justice. From that point of view, I would like to request, through you, the hon. Minister that at least 50 percent telephones should be there in the rural areas and 50 percent in the urban areas .....Just listen to me. I am coming to that point, Mr. Gopalsamy. I know that is an important point, but you don't have patience. That is my grievance.

My friend from Opposition, Dr. Bapu Kaldate, has raised a very appropriate point about the non-working of the telephones. At my district place in Nanded, in the morning they told us that they were testing the telephones of VIPs and within five or ten minutes, for the entire day the telephone became dead. It is not the fault of the Government. So I request the hon. Minister to see that the staff of the Telecommunications Department works properly. They must have gentlmanly behaviour. If it is not a Member of Parliament or some other honourable person, they do not answer properly. Their behaviour is most arrogant. That is our experience also. I request the hon. Minister to look into these matters.

There is another most welcome point. The hon. Minister has said: "Development in telecommunication technology has also necessitated replacing our old exchanges with electronic telephone exchanges". At least at some places this has taken place.

I also welcome the Minister's statement in point No. 5 that the revised tariff is expected to yield an additional revenue of about Rs. 500 crores in full year. We will not mind if you charge more from the telephone subscribers because normally a person who uses a telephone is considered to be a well-to-do person, but then it must be seen how much tax shoud be charged from him.

In point No. 7, the hon. Minister has stated that the Department has a wide network of about 1,45,000 Post Offices through the length and breadth of the country, of which 1,27,000 are located in

[Shri Vithalrao Madhavrao Jadhav]

rural and remote areas. The Department proposes to open about 3,000 more Post Offices in each of the remaining two years of the current Plan. We have 5 lakh villages and we are having the facility of Post Office in 1,27,000 villages. In the remaining villages, we are not having this facility. Now Post Office in a basic necessity of every village, whether it is a Gram Panchayat or Wadi, or whatever might be the population. It must, at least, have the Post Office facility. So I request the Minister to have a comprehensive plan to provide at least one Post Office in each village..... I am doing some of your work, but you are not happy.

Then another thing is that the Government desires to undertake a massive programme of providing postal facilities in each one of the remaining 74,000 Panchayat villages in the next two years. Of course this is a very welcome statement. I want that there should be a comprehensive plan to open post offices in all the villages of the country so they are brought on the main line of communication.

Another thing which I appreciate is the new service called "Speed Post" which was started last year. Though, of course, the telephone system is no working properly, I am happy with the services of the post offices. Some faults and drawbacks are always there, but I am happy that on the whole, 99 per cent of the post offices are working effectively. There I fully support our Minister.

One more point I would like to make is that if we do not increase our revenue, setting up the new system or new post offices or new telephone connections would not be possible. So, from that point of view I welcome the statement of the Minister with the reservation that whatever small increase has been proposed on money orders should be taken back. If you want to increase or maintain your revenue, you can increase the charges on other telephone also, which I won't mind.

Thank you, Sir.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY (Karnataka): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, the statement made by my friend, the Minister, on telecommunication tariff has come as a rude shock to me. If you allow me to use an expression, this is bordering on crime. It is bordering on crime because every economic norm has been flouted and the Government is indulging, of late, in a most naked, scandalous, daylight robbery of the people of this nation by imposing tremendous financial burden on the people of this country which is already groaning under various stresses and strains.

SHRI RAM AWADHESH SINGH (Bihar): Broad daylight robbery?

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY: Sir, this Government is really running riot: I don't find any financial discipline at all. And he mentioned revenue mobilization of Rs. 500 crores as a mere, minor exercise and this has come on the eve of the Budget itself. This is a budget of this Department and he has resorted to a most surreptitious means of raising resources, without resorting to budgetary processes. We have been witnessing, since sometime past, that mobilization of resources is being done through statements, notifications, declarations and Ordinances—bypassing and bypassing the budgetary processes.

Sir, this Government has destroyed the sanctity of the Budget and resorted to financial profligacy, if I may say so, the most blatant financial profligacy. This is not a simple exercise; this is not a thing to be introduced in the lean hours of the session, in the afternoon. What prevented the Government from taking this up during the budget time? Why was this not made a part and parcel of the budget? Why? Why are they adopting these means of bringing budget through different periods, by instalments? The total effect of all these measures up to now - I am not talking of the coming budget will impose intolerable burden on the nation. The most salient aspect of budgeting is missed. The most salient aspect of economic management of the

country is missed. That is economic discipline.

I have had the occasion to go through some of the activities of the Telecommunication Department. What I find is very shocking. Shocking is not the word. Words fail me to describe the wretchedness, the mess, the chaos there is in this Department. Orders have been placed for various items, for various materials which have been stored, which have not been used for decades.

We are told, there is shortage of money. There is no shortage of money. There is shortage of competence. If at all there is any shortage, there is shortage of efficency and economy in the Department. There are enough resource available already for meeting legitimate expenses and justifiable expansions. My charge is, this Department is irresponsible. It is not rendering service to the country at all. In the name of service it is rendering disservice. It is a tale of woe of any person who has got a telephone anywhere as the telephone system is not working well. For a rotten system, we have to pay a heavy price.

Sir, what is happening? What is being done today? Already the tariff is very high. If you take the trunk call charges, the minimum is Rs. 2 up to 20km. as on today, and the maximum is Rs. 36 beyond 1000 km. That works out to 18 times more from the minimum to the maximum. And what is being done now? This is being now raised to 22 times, more than 22 times in the case of the trunk call charges.

In respect of STD, Sir, 60 paise per unit is being increased to one rupee, 40 per cent at one go. Can you call this wise, proper, reasonable, logical, justifiable? By any standard, by any norm it is scandalous. Sir, the Government stands indicted for indulging in reckless indulgence in financial mismanagement, for indulging in misapplication of funds, for indulging in misdirection of resources. I hold you guilty at the altar of this House for all the sins of commissions and omissions that the country and the people of this country have to bear. For what? For all your mistakes, for your sins, for your crimes.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI (Madhya Pradesh): Sir, whoever has drafted this Statement for the Minister cannot be accused of any lack of sense of humour. After elaborating the proposed hike in tariff the Minister has been asked to tell this House very cooly "I do hope the hon. Members will support this small increase in the tariff rates". I do not know if the Minister realises that this is a cruel joke on Parliament and a cruel joke on the people to talk about this as being a small increase and hoping that the whole House will applaud this increase. It is amazing.

Well, I sympathise with Mr. Santosh Mohan Dev. He is no longer in charge of this Department. He was there. And obviously the new Minister, who also knows that he may not be in charge of that Department for long, because he is holding only an additional charge, when he went through all this, found that this proposal was totally indefensible. He could not defend it. Therefore, he chose upon the Minister of Defence to defend it. He picked upon him to come over here and present it to this House.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: He may be precursor of the day to come when the Defence Minister may present the Budget so that nobody can oppose it.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: My colleagues have said it. Even then it bears repetition that adoption of a Budget for the whole year has a system behind it. Over the last few years we have undermined this Budgetary exercise by having taxation in instalments. In a period of two months, a series of instalments of financial burdens are imposed on the people in order that towards the end when 28th February or 29th February comes they can go to the people saying that they have not imposed very many burdens on the people though that is only the last instalment. I am sure by now every common man has come to realise that this does not mean anything.

[Shri Lal K. Advani]

Now, they are prepared for taxation the year round. Now they understand it.

There had been two instalments first—hike on sugar, on edible oil, on petrol and all that—and today, on 24th, we have had two more and major instalments. Madhavrao Scindia was here half-an-hour earlier and he imposed his third instalment. And here, we have the Minister of Defence acting on behalf of the Minister of Communications giving us the fourth instalment you have only to go on adding up the tax burden I have tried to find out what exactly are the implication. The Railway Budget says that an additional revenue of Rs. 241 crores will be recovered from increase in freight; Rs. 358 crores from increase in passenger fares; Rs. 23 crores from increase in parcel and luggage rates, Rs. 622 crores is Madhavrao Scindia's contribution to the burden of the common man. And Mr. Santosh Mohan Dev, the former Minister of Communications, comes to the House with a proposal of Rs. 549 crores. I have not seen the earlier increase, but this would be an all-time high, an all-time record, so far as increase in postal and communication tariff concerned. I am sure of it. Yet, he calls it a very 'small increase' which he hopes the whole House will applaud.

This is not the occasion for analysis, but there is no doubt that anyone who wants to increase his revenues by adding to money order rates, is being cruel to the common man. He is not concerned with the common people at all. There is absolutely no doubt about it. Who sends a Rs. 100 money order? For Rs. 100 money order you say: 'I am increasing only by 50 paise and one rupee only and it will not mean much burden" why are you emphasising it? You say "we are incompetent, we cannot run the country with these resources." As some members have said, this seems to be a prelude for handing over all these public utility services to the private sector. If you are incompetent, say it and admit it. Don't justify it. This hike in the price of inland letter and money order is unjustifiable.

So far as your telephones are concerned, we are not today discussing the performance of the telephone system. I have nothing to say today except to quote what the Prime Minister was saying the other day. I was listening to a television speech of his to the communication representatives from the world. He told them "It is an irony that in our country. It is easier to speak to New York. It is easier to speak to foreign countries but it is impossible to speak to some one in the same city, same country." This is the certificate given to the Ministry of Communications by no less a person than the Prime Minister, and publicity. What do you talk of services?

Sir, there is a lot of talk in this statement about post offices being opened in the countryside. You have deliberately taken a decision sometime back not to have post offices in the countryside. Those lakhs of people, lakhs of employees, whom you call extra departmental employees who have been till now bearing the whole burden of providing services to the countryside, the villages, how you have been treating? Repeated judgements by the Supreme Court have been dishonoured by your Government. So far as extra departmental employees are concerned, I would like to plead with the Minister that this is an occasion for stock-taking. In this very speech you have said that you will be coming formally to this House later. The formal end of today's proposals will come when under section 7 of the Telegraphs Act you come to this House with the official gazette and place it on the Table of the House. Before you come here, my request to you and my demand from you is to assure this House that all that has been said in this House today will be taken into consideration and the gazette will be suitably modified and then laid on the Table of the House. Unless you give this assurance, there is no question of our being party to anything that you say or do. Thank you, Sir.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, it is yet another dishonest and unethical move on the part of the

Government to collect revenues without going via the normal budgetary norms and process. They have already made a hike in the administered prices to the tune of Rs. 2,200 crores under the name of drought relief. Now that the railway budget has been announced they had increased a burden by another Rs. 700 crores. Today, here is a proposal for collecting revenue to the tune of Rs. 549 crores. My colleague, Mr. Advani had correctly pointed out that after making this effort which the Minister has stated as a small measure the definition of 'small' to him is taken by the physical size of the Minister, they will show when general budget would be presented that there was no large dose of taxation. I think, Sir, you are quite well aware of the total taxation measures. I say 'taxation measures' the Central Government had resorted to last year.

In the General Budget, it was around Rs. 400 crores, and Mr. Advani had correctly pointed out that if this way, the revenue is collected, then when the final Budget will be presented, the people will be asked to believe that this Government is very kind and sympathetic, that it has not taken recourse to any further taxation measures. This is a deceptive, spurious, dishonest and unethical way of imposing tax burdens on the people. Mr. Vice Chairman, Sir, the statement itself is a piece of hypocrisy. It is a hyprocritical statement. I say this because in paragraph 3 of his statement, it has been stated and I quote:

> "to spare these under-privileged from extra burden, rentals of telephones in the telephone exchange systems of less than 100 lines, Public Telephone charges in respect of public telephones situated in rural areas and charges for telegrams have been retained at the present level."

Will the hon. Minister kindly state what the definition of under-privileged is in his dictionary? Does he know who are called under-privileged? Do they have any record as to how many rural people take recourse to telephone? What is their percentage? Is there anybody who takes recourse to telephone for communication purposes who is called under privileged? There are 6,00,000 villages but there is only 1,27,000 rural post offices. During Mr. Kidwai's time, it was a decision on the part of the Central Government that there shall be a post office in every village and I am saying during the tenure of this Prime Minister, during the last three years, 30,000 rural post offices have been sought to be abolished. They have changed the standards. Many Congress I) Members do not know about it. They are not made aware of the fact that they have changed the standard of setting up post office. My colleague had pleaded for setting up at least a post office in each village. But they have changed the standard of setting up post offices in village. So, I do not know whether you have been made aware about that postal instruction because many Members of Parliament belong to the village. You represent the villages. But the question is that when they talk of telecommunications mission, when they talk of 21st century technology to be introduced in the case of telecommunications, when they talk of having an automatic telephone exchange or electronised telephone exchanges in the suburbs and in the countryside, they are abolishing the post offices. They have decided to abolish 30,000 post offices and now they ask the people to bear the burden, the cost of electronised telephone exchanges. Who will utilise the electronised telephone exchanges? Who will take recourse to the facilities of electronised telephone exchanges? (*Interruptions*).

SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV: When you are demanding everyday from Calcutta...

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: No. I do not demand it. I have not demanded it. I am not that kind of Member of Parliament. I know everything. About the telephone exchanges, you know, Sir, per thousand lines, they have a standard of staff, both for internal and external exchange, 123 people. They have reduced the number to 75 and they have a target of reducing that number to a mere 13 per thousand lines after going for electronised telephone exchange. In one way, Bapu Kaldate was telling that with the electroni-

[Shri Dipen Ghosh]

sation of the telephone exchange, they are going to reduce the staff strength, they are going to kill the employment potential in the telephone service, on the other hand, they are going to impose Rs. 500 crores extra burden on common people to pay for the electronisation of telephone exchanges. This is the hypocrsy of helping the under-privileged. Sir, you are aware of the conditions in the villages. In the Statement it has been mentioned that tariff for STD calls made during late hours of the night will be reduced to 25 percent of the normal tariff. Has the Minister or his Secretary in the Department gone in the midnight to the Indian villages? Who takes recourse to the midnight telephone? The Prime Minister himself might have taken recourse, sometimes, to midnight telephones, to call Mr. Santosh Mohan Dev waking him up in the Airport hotel for him to become the Minister of Defence the next morning. Even city-dwellers who are middle-class people, do not take recourse to midnight STD calls. Who use it, Dr. Bapu Kaldate has stated. You also know Bombay well. Mr. Vice-Chairman There, the 'mutkawallahs' and 'shattawallahs' use the midnight telephone. The people who play 'mukta' and 'satta' and their 'agents and others like them take recourse to this facility. Certain businessmen also take recourse to midnight calls because India's midnight is afternoon in the U.S.A. So, for these businessmen who require their business transactions to be done through STD calls, they are being given a concession of 25 per cent. For 'muktawallahs' and 'shattawallas' and these businessmen, the concession is given. That is why I call it hypocrisy.

Now, Sir, who takes recourse to Money Orders? Who sends money through Money Orders? The rich people? Do the rich people send money through Money Orders? No, it is the workers—the Bihar workers working in Bombay or Calcutta, the Uttar Pradesh workers woking in Bombay or Calcutta or the ordinary people who are working in the cities—send money to their relatives, wife, parents and children, and they are being taxed. Why? So that rich men could be provided with a 25 percent reduction in the mid-night STD calls. This is hypocrisy.

Again, the Statement says, "A new service called "Speed Post" was started last year, has picked up considerably even in the face of stiff competition from private couriers". How much one is required to pay for Speed Post? Rs. 25|-. For one letter to be sent from Delhi to Calcutta or Delhi to Bombay or Delhi to Madras, Rs. 25/- is required. The minimum is Rs. 25|-. Who will take recourse to that Speed Post system? The villagers? The running sorting section of the R.M.S. has been abolished. Now, they say that the first class mail will go by air. That is only for areas covered by airports. The letters addressed from one village to another have to travel by sealed bags on the railway. So, Sir, I am sorry that we cannot associate ourselves with this

4.00 P.M. Statement. I would rather request the Minister to withdraw it. As Mr. Adanvi has said, there is still time because it has to be gazetted...

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA (Andhra Pradesh): Give us an assurance that you will withdraw it.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: He should withdraw it. Let me tell you very frankly, he may not withdraw it today; if he darea withdrawing it, he may have to lose his job of Minister. There are Members and Ministers who at heart are agreeable to support our cause but they will not dare do so because after this biennial election which is round the corner, many of them would not get renomination. I only want to forewarn him and, through you, the Government and the Treasury Benches, if this is not withdrawn—I know by majority it may be passed but—the people will fight it on the streets. The fight has already started and it will take a forward step on 15th March. If by that time they do not withdraw this thing, that fight will be pursued and 1977 will be re-enacted and this Government will be thrown out by the people of our country. So I request the Minister, at least in the interests of his Ministership—because, as long as Rajiv Gandhi remains Prime Minister,

he will remain a Minister but if Rajiv Gandhi does not remain Prime Minister, he himself will not remain a Minister; so, in the interests of his leader, Rajiv Gandhi, if he is really interested to see that his leader still remains a leader—he should withdraw this; otherwise, we will fight it on the streets.

श्री राम अवधेश सिंह : उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, मुझको यह जो मंत्री जी का बयान है और दूरसंचार द्वारा लगाया पांच सौ करोड़ रुपये का जो अधिभार है, इसके संबंध में मुझे दो बातें कहनी हैं।

एक तो यह है कि जो परम्परायें स्थापित की जा रही है इस देन में इस सरकार के द्वारा, उसे आने वाली पीढ़िया बहुत नीची निगाह से देखेंगी। बजट पेश होने वाला है, 28 या 29 तारीख को कनवेंशनली पेश होता है, इस साल शायद 29 तारीख को पेश होगा, वैसे 28 फरवरी को होता है। चार दिन महज बाकी हैं। अब चार दिन में पहले अलग-अलग विभागों का बजट पेश हो रहा है। रेल बजट के लिए तो पहले से ही परम्परा थी कि वह अलग से पहले पेश होता है, लेकिन यह डाक-तार विभाग का बजट भी अलग से पेश हो रहा है। अगले साल फिर कोई तीसरा विभाग अपना अलग से बजट पेश करेगा, फिर एग्रीकल्चर विभाग अपनी ओर से बजट पेश करेगा।

तो इस ढंग से एक नई परम्परा स्थापित की जा रही है और पूरे बजट को तोड़-फोड़ कर यह दिखाने के लिए कि जो मुख्य बजट पेश होगा, उसमें हमारी जनता के ऊपर कर का भार ज्यादा हैं या कम है, यह दिखाना चाहते हैं कि हम कम लगा रहे हैं। तो इस तरह से एक बहुत बुरी परम्परा स्थापित हो रही है।

पिछले दो-तीन महीनों में जो काम सरकार ने किया है, उसको अगर ठीक ढंग से देखा जाए, उसकी व्याख्या की जाए, तो काफी कर बढ़ाया जा चुका है, सीधा और अप्रत्यक्ष रूप से। लोहे और स्टील का दाम करीब-करीब एक हजार रुपये टन बढाया गया है, जो एक ऐतिहासिक बढ़ोतरी है। एक हजार रुपये टन शायद कभी भी स्टील का दाम नहीं बढ़ा है। खाने का तेल, डीजल, कोयला इन सब का क्यूमलेटिव इफैक्ट होता है। अगर स्टील का दाम थोक मार्केट में आप बढ़ाते हैं 15 परसेंट तो उसका अंतिम उपभोक्ता पर असर पड़ता है और उस पर 30 से 40 परसेंट तक बढ़ोत्तरी हो जाती है, न केवल की-प्रोडक्ट्स का दाम बढ़ाने से कोयला, लोहा डीजल तथा पैट्रोल इनके दाम बढेंगे तो ट्रांसपोर्टेशन कास्ट बढ़ता है, लोहा बढ़ाने से यह साबुन बनाने वाले कारखाने, कपड़ा बनाने वाले कारखाने तमाम का दाम बढ़ जाता है। यह तो पहले कर लिया और जो इसमें बढ़ाया है यह दिखाने के लिए कि हम बजट में नहीं बढ़ा रहे हैं। महोदय, जैसे दीपेन बाबू ने कहा कि कोई ऐसी इसमें दृष्टि नहीं है कि गरीबों के लिए कुछ किया गया, नाम गरीबों का लिया गया है, गांवों का लिया गया है कि गांवों और गरीबों के लिए हम कर रहे हैं लेकिन जो कुछ किया गया है वह मल्टी-नेशनलज और पूंजीपतियों के लिए किया गया है। उन्ही की भलाई के लिए सारा काम किया गया है। क्योंकि यह इनलैंड लैटर पर 30 फीसदी बढ़ा है, मनीआर्डर पर 20 फीसदी बढ़ा है। मंत्री जी क्या कह रहे हैं कि थोड़ा, बहुत थोड़ा सा हम बढ़ा रहे हैं। लेकिन मैं मंत्री जी से यह पूछना चाहता हूं कि आज तक का इतिहास बताएं कि पोस्टल डिपार्टमेंट से जब कभी भी बढ़ोत्तरी हुई है टैक्स में या किराए में या उनके पोस्टकार्ड पर, लिफाफे पर, रजिस्ट्रेशन पर तो कभी मैं यह नहीं समझता हूं कि मनीआर्डर पर 20 फीसदी बढ़ा है, इनलैंड पर 30 फीसदी बढ़ा है, यह एस० टी० डी० काल पर 40 फीसदी बढ़ाया है 5 हजार काल से अधिक पर

[श्री राम अवधेश सिंह]

55 फीसदी बढ़ाया है, 276 से 2000 काल तक जो सीमा है उसमें 25 फीसदी बढ़ाया है और दूरी के हिसाब से 50 किलोमीटर से अधिक 100 किलोमीटर के बीच में 25 फीसदी बढ़ाया फिर 100 किलोनीटर से दो सौ किलोमीटर के बीच में 25 फीसदी बढ़ाया और 200 से 500 किलोमीटर में 33 फीसदी बढ़ाया है। तो महोदय, इनका थोड़ा कितना है? तो यह 30 प्रतिशत, 40 फीसदी या 25 फीसदी इनका बहुत थोड़ा है, तो फिर अधिक कितना होगा? आज तक जब कभी भी बढ़ाया गया है 25 फीसदी से 40 फीसदी दाम बढ़ाया गया है, चार्ज ज्यादा बढ़ाया गया है तो यह बात तो धोखा देने वाली बात है और यह जनहित विरोधी बात है। यह मूल्य वृद्धि या सेवा के चार्ज में वृद्धि है तो हम चाहेंगे कि मंत्री जी इस पर पुनर्विचार करें और पुनर्विचार करके इस वृद्धि को मुकम्मल तौर पर वापस लें। अगर मुकम्मल तौर पर वापस नहीं लेंगे तो हम लोग समर्थन करने की बात तो दूर है हम लोग इसका बायकाट करेंगे।

एक माननीय सदस्य : टेलीफोन का?

श्री राम अवधेश सिंह : टेलीफोन का नहीं मंत्री महोदय के जो इन्होंने रखा है वृद्धि का प्रस्ताव इसमें हम लोग एसोशियेट नहीं करेंगे और हम लोग बायकाट करेंगे। हम बार-बार कहना चाहते हैं कि इसको वापस लें और पूरी तौर पर वापस लें जनहित में और यह गरीब और गांव के नाम पर अमीरों को फायदा देने वाली दुविधाजनक और ढपोलशंखी बातें बन्द करें।

श्री मीर्जा इर्शादबेग (गुजरात): उप भाध्यक्ष जी, विपक्ष ने जो बातें कहीं उनसे एक बात स्पष्ट रूप से प्रकट होती है कि आम जनता के साथ उनका कोई सरोकार है ही नहीं। मैं यह बताना चाहता हूं कि लोक सभा में जो जन-प्रतिनिधि बैठे हैं और राज्य सभा में जो जन-प्रतिनिधि बठे हैं, उनमें अधिकांश इसी पार्टी से संबंध रखते हैं।

श्री दीपेन घोष : एक बार चुनाव हो जाए।

श्री मीर्जा इर्शादबेग : हर बार आप लोग यही कहते हैं और हर बार आपको मुंह की दी है। त्रिपुरा में भी यही हुआ है, मान्यवर, एक तरफ तो पोस्टल डिपार्टमेंट और टेलिफोन डिपार्टमेंट से सुविधाएं मांगी जाती हैं। हां, मैं उनके साथ इस बात में अपने को संबद्ध करता हूं कि एडमिनिस्ट्रेशन में कई त्रुटियों हैं और उनको सुधारने की मंत्री महोदय कोशिश करें। लेकिन जब हम गांव-गांव में टेलिफोन और पोस्ट आफिस चाहते हैं तो संतोष मोहन देव जी के पास कोई अलादीन का चिराग तो है नहीं कि उसको वे घुमाएंगे और उसमें से पैसा आ जाएगा। मैं पूछना चाहता हूं कि क्या विगत वर्षों में कागज के दाम नहीं बढ़े? तो इसकी पूर्ति कहां से होगी? मैं पूछना चाहता हूं कि यहां पर टेलिफोन किसके मकान पर है? जो खर्च बर्दाश्त कर सकते हैं, उनके यहां टेलिफोन है। हां, अगर सिस्टम में कोई गलती है तो उसको सुधारने की कोशिश करें। हम एक तरफ हमेशा मांग करते हैं कि हरेक क्षेत्र में एस. टी. डी. हो, तो उसके लिए पैसा चाहिए। हां सिस्टम में खराबी है। मेरा टेलिफोन खराब रहा है, संतोष मोहन देव जी का भी टेलिफोन खराब रहा है, लेकिन इसका मतलब यह नहीं है कि सुविधाएं न बढ़ायी जाएं। मैं यह पूछना चाहता हूं कि टेलिफोन डिपार्टमेंट के लोगों की जो मांगें हैं, उसका समर्थन कौन कर रहा है उनकी पगार बढ़ाने के लिए पैसा कहां से आएगा। हां, मनिआर्डर के बारे में मैं आप लोगों की बात का समर्थन करता हूं। इसलिए कि मनिआर्डर की राशि का कामन मेन से संबंध आता है। मैं मंत्री महोदय से बड़े आग्रहपूर्वक कहना चाहूंगा कि कम से कम इसके अंदर एक स्लैब निर्धारित करें कि एक ही एड्रेस से दूसरे एक ही एड्रेस पर अगर एक महीने के अन्दर कम से कम 300 रुपया भेजा जाता है, तो उस पर वही पुराने स्लैब से चार्ज करना चाहिए। आपके नए चार्ज उस पर

नहीं लगने चाहिए। यह मेरी मांग है और जो दूसरी बातें कही गयी हैं, वह राजनीतिक बातें हैं और उन बातों पर हमें नहीं जाना चाहिए। वक्त आएगा, हम देखेंगे। जब-जब वक्त आया है तो जनता ने किस को एडमिनिस्ट्रेशन में रखा है, यह सब जानते हैं। इसको शब्दों के साथ मैं आपका आभार मानता हूं कि आपने मुझे समय दिया। धन्यवाद।

SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV : Sir, I have heard with rapt attention the views expressed by the hon. Members on this side and on the opposition side. More or less, one point has been raised by the opposition and that is that the Government has flouted financial discipline by coming to the Parliament before the Budget. This is not the correct picture. Section 7 of the Indian Telegraph Act, 1877, and the Post Office Act of 1885 give inherent powers to the Government to notify and come to the Parliament. But in view of the fact that in the past observations were made both in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha that as far as possible it should not be done just before the Budget, we have not done it by notification. We have come to the Parliament with a statement today. It will be effective from 1st April. As Mr. Advani has very rightly said, when the Gazette notification will be placed before the House, the Members will get more scope to discuss if it is permitted by the Chairman or the Speaker.

Sir, another view that has been....

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA : Why is this hurry now?

SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV : There is no question of hurry. It should have been done earlier. To give honour to the Members, we have come to the House. The inherent rule is there. We could have done it. And many Members who are in this House now probably do not know that even in 1979 it was done, it was raised. Those who are sitting now might not have been the Members. They belong to those parties. For public consumption you can say. It was done by any Government which had been in power. (*Interruptions*)

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JAGESH DESAI): This is not new for this year. This was done in the past also.

श्री राम अवधेश सिंह : चार रोज पहले क्यों ले आए इसे ?

श्री सन्तोष मोहन देव : पहले नहीं लाए, अभी हम लाए है, आप रिजेक्ट कर दीजिए। It is up to you. The second thing, Sir....

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JAGESH DESAI): This was done in the past also.

SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV : Unfortunately, Sir, many of the facts are not known to the Members. It may be our fault; it may be the fault of the Members. But I would like to share with them. In the case of post card we have not increased the present rate of 15 paise. And on the traffic which is now being carried out throughout the country we have to bear a deficit of Rs. 45.52 crores. The Government is bearing this on their own to give service to the rural people, to the downtrodden people for whom the Opposition thinks that they are the champions and they are protecting them. For the post card, we have not increased and we have taken a deficit of Rs. 45.52 crore on our shoulders. And in spite of increasing the present rate, we have to go for borrowing for telecommunications of about roughly Rs. 400 crores to implement the scheme, the scheme which is aimed at seenig that the imbalance between that rural telephone and the urban telephone is nullified. And that ambitious scheme has been taken up. The Prime Minister has not said that the present over-all situation of the telecommunications is bad. True, if you compare the STD or the long-distance facility with the facilities which are existing in the smaller towns or villages, it is definitely poor. And as such we have taken a vow: one electronic exchange a day will be coming into the national network.

श्री लाल कृष्ण आडवाणी : ये उसका जिक्र कर रहे हैं जो मैंने कहा कि एक ही शहर में भी फोन करते हैं तो मिलते नहीं हैं ... (व्यवधान)

SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV : I do not dispute that. But we have to see that the imbalance is removed.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: It is not imbalance. It is....

SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV: Mr. Dipen Ghosh has said that he does not want an electronic exchange. But we want because the strowger and the crossbar systems have become outdated...

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: If the cost of electronisation has to be borne by the poor villagers, then we do not want it.

SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV : It is not borne by the poor villagers. It is being equally distributed over the country.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH : You closed down 30,000 post offices.

SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV : Sir, when the hon. Member spoke, I have not interrupted him. I expect him to allow me to speak.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JAGESH DESAI): Let him continue.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: Why did you close down 30,000 post offices?

SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV: I have not closed down 30,000 post offices.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: Your Government, not you.

SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV: My Department has not closed. Rather we have opened 980... (*Interruptions*)

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JAGESH DESAI): Let him continue. After he has given the clarification, you can ask.

SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV: The hon. Member is misleading the House. 30,000 post offices have not been closed..

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JAGESH DESAI): You go ahead with your reply.

SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV: Rather 980 new post offices have been opened....

SHRI RAM AWADHESH SINGH: How many closed?

SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV: Not a single one has been closed this year. (*Interruptions*) Let me clarify. In certain areas there were certain post offices which were beyond the norms. Those post offices have been clubbed as it was done in the case of Hyderabad. The most affected place is Hyderabad. But... (*Interruptions*) But, we have rather liberalised the norms Even after this increase, the Postal Department will have to get a budgetary support of Rs. 100 crores. (*Interruptions*)

श्री लाल कृष्ण आडवाणी : यह कहना कि कोई भी बन्द नहीं किया, गलत स्टेटमेंट है (व्यवधान)

SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV: And if he continue speaking like that, I cannot complete my reply. You give him a chance to speak again.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: He is misleading the House.

SHRI RAM AWADHESH SINGH : Sir, I am on a point of order. (*Interruptions*).

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JAGESH DESAI): Please listen. This was a very serious matter and I myself decided that I will give opportunity to as many Members as possible and I will not restrict the time also. I have allowed 15 Members and I have also not asked them to speak less. Now, he has understood all your points and he has known the views of the Members from both the sides. Let him reply now.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: Sir, he is misleading the House. He has admitted....

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JAGESH DESAI): If he is misleading the House, then you have got other avenues. You can make use of those avenues.

SHRI RAM AWADHESH SINGH: Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, 40,000 post offices have been closed.

मेरा व्यवस्था का प्रश्न है इन्होंने कहा कि 30 हजार पोस्ट आफिसेज क्लोज हो गये हैं जब कि यह कह रहे हैं कि एक भी क्लोज नहीं हुआ तो मैं जानना चाहता हूं कि कौन सी बात सही है ?

This is a point of privilege. Sir, this is a point of privilege.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: Mr. Vice-Chairman, I can show you the Government order regarding abolition of post offices. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI RAM AWADHESH SINGH: This is a very serious matter. This is a point of privilege.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JAGESH DESAI): Mr. Minister, you want to clarify or say anything?

PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: Sir, let him say clearly whether any post office has been closed in Andhra Pradesh or not? I want this clarification.

SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV: I repeat that 30,000 post offices have not been closed.

PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: How many have been closed?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JAGESH DESAI): Let him complete ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: I will show you the Government order.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JAGESH DESAI): He has said only one sentence. Let him complete.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: The Minister has also said that not a single post office has been closed. We want a categorical reply from the Minister, how many post offices have been closed?

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: In a meeting of the M.Ps. with the Post Master General of Andhra Circle, the Post Master General told us that a large number of post offices have been closed. I do not remember the exact number now. It is in hundreds in Andhra Circle alone. And he has also admitted that the Andhra Circle has shown over enthusiasm and over-zeal in closing down the post offices. He has admitted it. Therefore, the Minister's statement is wrong.

SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV: Mr. Dipen Ghosh in his statement has said, if I remember aright, that in 1987-88, 30,000 post offices have been closed.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: No, I have not said like that. I have said that by this time you have closed 30,000 post offices. You have changed the norms. You have taken recourse to....

SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV: In 1987-88, as I understood him...

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: No, no. I said...

SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV: Why don't you allow me to speak?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JAGESH DESAI): Please allow him to speak.

SHRI RAM AWADHESH SINGH: Sir, this is a very serious matter.

SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV: As I understood him in 1987-88, 30,000 post offices ...

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: I am not so unintelligent as you are...

SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV: As an intelligent man he should have the courtesy to listen to me first. I will yield to him after I finish. (*Interruptions*).

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JAGESH DESAI): Please allow him to complete the reply.

SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV: In 1987-88, no post office has been closed. Now, in the year 1985-86 and 1986-87, in urban 655 and in rural 307, i.e., 962 post offices were closed, and not 30,000 as has been said.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: I will quote my sentence and ...

SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV: If you have any figures, if you give it, I will admit. I will say what has been given to me. Rather recently, the norms have been changed...

श्री राम अवधेश सिंह : नार्म्स चेन्ज करके बंद किया। नार्म्स चेंज कर दिये और बंद कर दिया।

SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV: About 215 Members of Parliament gave a memorandum to the Prime Minister that more post offices should be opened and as such 6000 post offices are going to be opened. There will be postal facilities in all Panchayat areas. The Minister will come with the plan and the programme subsequently and for budgetary support...

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will he reopen all those closed post offices?

SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV: I cannot commit; it depends on the new policy that will be adopted. I may also put on record that even after the increased rates, Government will have to give a budgetary support of Rs. 28.12 crores in the case of inland letters, Rs. 1.10 crore in the case of envelopes and Rs. 26.72 crore in case of registration. So it is wrong to say that we are passing on all the burden of the increased cost to the consumer. We know it is a large country; people live in remote areas and even in urban areas, middle-class people cannot afford all the burden. So only to some extent which was the bare necessity, the Government has increased the rates and still the cost has to be met by budgetary support. It is wrong to say that it is a black day or that we are doing something anti-people. We are not doing anything anti-people. We have taken into consideration the views of the people. About the views expressed here with regard to money-order charges. I shall convey them to the appropriate place; I cannot commit anything now.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: Whether he is going to withdraw it; let him say.

SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV: I can assure the House that all these views will be conveyed to appropriate place. I will definitely do so but I cannot commit anything and I cannot withdraw it. With these words I conclude.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: We are not satisfied with his reply and ... (*Interruptions*).

We withdraw in protest.

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: In protest we are walking out.

श्री सत्य प्रकाश मालवीय : मैं दिन भर के लिये वाकआउट करता हूं।

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: I also walk out in protest.

[At this stage some hon. Members left the Chamber].

MOTION OF THANKS ON THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS—contd.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JAGESH DESAI): Now Mirza Irshadbaig to second the Motion of Thanks.